

January 27, 2015

Senator Dante Bartolomeo
Representative Diana Urban
Committee on Children
State Capitol Building, Room 011
Hartford, CT 06106

Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and members of the of the Committee on Children.

I am Rosemary Maxfield. I am a resident of Connecticut, an advertising executive, a mother of five children and am here in my role as Advisory Board Member for Reach Out and Read Connecticut. I would like to lend my support for S.B. No. 209 An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program.

As a mother, I have personally witnessed the importance of reading to children from an early age – and the immense head start those children get as they enter kindergarten. My youngest child attends third grade in the Stamford public system. I have personally witnessed the immense gap in vocabulary and reading comprehension among his classmates who were not read to at an early age. They struggle with the school work and often receive failing grades on reading and writing tests.

As an advertising executive, I have had the opportunity to help organizations such as Crayola and Johnsons & Johnsons' launch new interactive and educational toys for young children. I have led market research and ethnographies across multiple, diverse parents and their children in order to uncover insights as it relates to their product development. We found huge gaps of education competencies among underprivileged families. As we dug deeper, we realized that the common denominator was when parents did not have the resources to read to their own small children.

The mission of Reach Out and Read is to make books a routine part of pediatric primary care so that children grow up with a love of books and reading, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. The Reach Out & Read model is already making a positive change in the Stamford communities – and needs to continue to expand to cover the entire city and all the other cities in CT.

My commitment to the Reach Out and Read Program is based on my belief (supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners) that early reading with young children provides a tremendous platform for future success in school.

Please support the funding of the Reach Out and Read Program.
Thank you for your consideration.

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